

reader may well be left with the impression that this new portrait is the same in feature as that by Joergensen or Fr Cuthbert. It is after all what we should expect. Not that men have not been ready to read their own ideals into St Francis ('thus then and thus he must have been', as Fr Martindale once wrote), and some strange caricatures have resulted; but the worst exaggerations of subjective interpretation do not survive comparison with writings which are accepted by all critics as authentically his and which we still possess. In them St Francis himself yet speaks.

As this is probably the best modern Life of St Francis for the English reader, it is a pity that its English dress is not a better fit. The translation is sometimes awkward and occasionally unfortunate. 'The blessed one' has a curiously alien sound. Kilometres and metres might be given their English equivalents. Also for the second edition, there are some misprints, particularly the note on p. 184 which reverses the authorities and makes Fr Cuthbert an opponent of the Portiuncula Indulgence.

A.E.H.S.

THE GOOD DUCHESS, Joan of France. By Ann M. C. Foster. (Burns Oates; 8s. 6d.)

This is a book which one closes with regret. The life story of St Joan of France, who was canonised in the Jubilee year 1950, is surely unique. The little Valois princess, second daughter of Louis XI, King of France, was born in 1464, and died in 1504—forty years, and, humanly speaking, mostly years of suffering. When only twenty-six days old, Joan was betrothed to Louis, the little son of Charles, Duke of Orleans, afterwards to become Louis XII of France. In this book we are given a short but charming picture of Joan's childhood spent in the country far from the Royal Court, in the old Château of Limière where she was placed at the age of five in kind guardianship. We may well believe that the quiet of the woods and of the fields and the peace of the little chapel attached to the castle, which the child learnt to love, did much to sow the seeds of the deep sanctity of her later years.

It was a short childhood. At the age of twelve, Joan was married to Louis of Orleans, grown into a gay, high-spirited boy, who neither loved nor understood his child wife. He did not want to marry her, but dared not disobey the command of the much-feared Louis XI. Young as she was, Joan looked on the marriage as something God wanted her to do, and she determined to do her best to make it a success. Louis, however, had no such determination and with the passing of the years his dislike of Joan increased rather than lessened. As soon as the crown of France came to him and he felt free at last to do as he wished, he set about getting rid of his wife. With some difficulty he obtained the annulment of the marriage. Joan had been Queen of France a very short time. She was given a small province with the title of Duchess of Berry.

She soon earned for herself the title of the 'Good Duchess', such was her personal care of her people, especially those who needed her help.

At last, not long before her death, Joan obtained a wish cherished since her childhood. She founded an order of nuns, known as the Annonciade. But there were seemingly endless difficulties to be met before the Order was approved and established. The first nuns were clothed in 1502. Joan herself took the vows, although, as we are told, 'the peace of the Enclosure was not for her'. She continued to carry out her duties as Duchess of Berry, and to care for her people who needed her.

This little book is written in a simple, straightforward style. The character of Joan is well brought out. Hers might be called a sad life, and yet it was a triumphant one. In the words of the author, St Joan of France was 'a nun, yet of the world: a duchess living under vow. Only by the inspiration and the special grace of God could such a thing be'.

FLORENS ROCH.

FATHER STEUART. By Katherine Kendall (Burns Oates; 15s.)

There are many praiseworthy aspects of this book, such as the fact that it was completed a year after Fr Steuart's death and published on the second anniversary of his funeral. But it would take too long to recount the exceptional successes of Miss Kendall's work. We have here to limit ourselves to the spiritual life and teaching of an exceptionally able Jesuit outlined skilfully in this book, often by a careful selection of his own words.

Father Steuart emerges as a real man who had learnt by hard experience the saving doctrines by which he helped so many men and women. The strong temper of Scottish aristocracy had to be transformed by increasing purifications into the instrument of grace. It was not until his sixtieth year that the last great trial took place, and it is to the special credit of this biography that the two or three great testing periods in his life are set forth with such simple frankness. His interior development not only showed itself in the realistic and direct way Fr Steuart treated the theological doctrines of the spiritual life in his books—which have been long familiar—but also in his appreciation of those whom he directed. The chapter on spiritual direction shows how he refused to try to make men and women fit into any preconceived pattern of spiritual formulæ. His one care was to see that those under his direction corresponded without hesitation to the grace bestowed on them individually for their own personal needs. The men and women who came to him were infinitely varied in temperament, upbringing and situation, and he helped them as he found they were, not as he fondly hoped they might become. The history of holiness in the Church reveals that there is nothing to take the place of personal piety and experience in the director of souls, but when this personal holiness is